

Dr. Peterson

Atlanta Public Schools Admissions Event

6:30 p.m. Tuesday, March 24, 2015, Alumni House

Welcome to Georgia Tech. We've got, I think, more than 100 guests today in a group that includes admitted students from the Atlanta Public Schools, family members, faculty representatives and a good number of APS administrators. We're also honored to have APS superintendent Meria Carstarphen with us. And we're very pleased to have a few of our first APS Scholars in attendance.

Those admitted students in attendance today have already cleared a big hurdle. Getting into Georgia Tech is not easy, and our Admissions office does a great job in a very difficult task. Of more than 11,000 students who applied for early admission, we accepted only 45 percent, about 5,300. So you're already part of an elite group.

It would be easy for Georgia Tech to become sort of a cloistered academic haven, but we don't see ourselves that way. We are citizens of one of the nation's great cities, and we strive to partner with Atlanta in ways large and small that benefit us both.

Our students are active in the community, contributing their time and talents to such programs as the Jacket-to-Jacket Reading Program, Covenant House Georgia, sports camps that bring Atlanta youngsters to our campus, and KIPP STRIVE Academy, a rigorous college preparatory school that's part of APS.

And speaking of KIPP, Dr. Carstarphen and I were part of a team that faced off against the KIPPsters last week in the "Are You Smarter Than A KIPPster" competition, and I'm sorry to say we didn't make the grade. We didn't feel too bad though ... this is the third year in the row the KIPPsters have won.

Tech Square, which opened in 2003, is now one of the Southeast's top research hubs. We partner with Atlanta-based businesses to drive innovation, and we help

entrepreneurs break into the marketplace. It's also a great learning laboratory for our students, and those of you who accept our invitation to come here might spend time there.

To give you a little recent history, last August we announced that Georgia Tech will offer automatic acceptance and four-year in-state tuition scholarships to all Atlanta Public Schools valedictorians and salutatorians who have successfully completed the prerequisite course work and admission process for entrance into Georgia Tech. APS Scholars can begin classes at Georgia Tech as early as the summer semester of 2015.

These scholarships are another example of our commitment to the Atlanta community, and we are pleased to partner with Atlanta Public Schools to not only offer admission to these deserving young people, but also to provide resources they need to succeed. Once they get here, we will help ensure that they can make a Georgia Tech degree a reality through a combination of the various financial aid opportunities, including our own Georgia Tech Promise Program, the Governor's REACH Georgia program and other state and federal financial aid programs.

To those of you who've been admitted, we sincerely hope you will accept our invitation. Georgia Tech is one of the world's leaders in STEM education, an area that is absolutely crucial if our country is to remain competitive in a global economy. Our students leave here with a world-class education and excellent professional prospects. The median starting salary for Georgia Tech graduates in 2014 was \$64,000 for a bachelor's degree and \$79,500 for a master's degree.

During your years at Tech, you will learn to think critically, to solve problems, to work in teams, and to develop innovative solutions for some of the world's most pressing problems. You'll make friends from all over the world – many that will last a lifetime. You will do things you never could have imagined or thought possible.

We realize that you, as students trying to decide what path to take, all have great options. If Georgia Tech is fortunate enough to be your choice, we will partner with you to make your educational experience the absolute best it can be.

And now, I'd like to call up our APS Scholars one by one so that we can all recognize them. When we're done, I believe the plans are to take a group photo, so if you'll just stay around for a bit, we'll get that done before we proceed to the next part of our program.